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ABSTRACT

The paper describes the changing preservice teacher education structure instituted at the State University College of Arts and Sciences at Potsdam, New York to comply with the trends dictated by P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. Ten competency clusters are listed as the basis for the regular teacher education program, with six components of training interwoven (including modeling and practice in simulated settings). Change strategies are diagramed. Noted are activities to involve key faculty members in program development. (CL)

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PUBLIC LAW 94-142

COLLEGE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT - RETRAINING THE TRAINERS

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Paper presented at the Annual Convocation of the Northeastern Educational Research Association, Ellenville, New York - October, 1980

EC 132 425

INTRODUCTION:

Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, created a setting in which a new set of skills are needed by regular educators in providing positive educational environments for all children including those with special needs. It is already apparent that most practicing teachers do not possess many of the needed skills and that the professional preparation of teachers does not provide the level of competency n eeded to successfully implement the law. It is therefore, necessary to reconceptualize preservice programs to address the intent and impact of the law and to retrain inservice teachers in order that they can acquire the competence to successfully provide settings in which appropriate education can be provided.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the activities of one institution to reconceptualize its preservice programs in light of the far-reaching implications of Public Law 94-142 and to describe the administrative strategy used in bringing about needed changes.

Teacher education programs in institutions of higher education depend on the direction of educational thrust in public schools. In recent years much legislation has been directed toward providing educational opportunities for minorities and the handicapped. The law with perhaps the most far-reaching implications is Public Law 94-142. Although primarily addressed to the provision of equal educational opportunities for the handicapped, it is not difficult to see the implications for the extension of educational opportunities for all children. With our nation's history of attempting to eradicate discrimination, it is reasonable to expect that the benefits provided handicapped children in Public Law 94-142 will soon be extended by law to include all children.

Recognizing the implications of the law and realizing the need for major revisions in teacher education programs in order to respond to the changing roles of teachers faculty at State University College of Arts and Science at Potsdam, New York is engaged in evaluating present programs in teacher preparation and recommending needed changes. Basic agreements reached are that programs should continue to be conceptualized as including the following five major components:

1. A general liberal education designed to produce an educated person.
2. Knowledge in those subject areas which are to be taught.
3. Liberal Studies areas designed to enhance basic knowledge related to human service, i.e. developmental patterns of children, social systems, learning theory.
4. Specific knowledge and teaching skills as related to children, parents, and education in general.
5. Educational foundations including history, structure, curriculum, legal and ethical aspects of teaching.

It is further agreed, that in order to satisfy component number one, the Bachelor of Arts degree will continue to be used as the vehicle most appropriate for assuring that graduates will be well-educated people. The completion of an academic major together with the general studies component provides both depth and breadth of study in the traditional liberal arts.

A major portion of the program developmental activities have been devoted to discussing content and delivery of knowledge and teaching skill development as indicated in component number four. It has been decided that programs of teacher preparation will be based on the ten competency clusters as described in the paper "A Common Body of Practice for Teachers: The Challenge of Public Law 94-142 to Teacher Education" prepared by Professor Maynard Reynolds and others under the sponsorship of the Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped.[1]

The ten competency clusters are listed as follows:

1. Curriculum
2. Teaching Basic Skills
3. Pupil and Class Management
4. Professional Consultation and Communication
5. Teacher-Parent-Student Relationships
6. Student-Student Relationships
7. Exceptional conditions
8. Referral
9. Individualized Teaching
10. Professional Values

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[1] Reynolds, Maynard C. A Common Body of Practice for Teachers: The Challenge of Public Law 94-142 to Teacher Education. Minneapolis: The National Support Systems Project. University of Minnesota. (no date).

The competency clusters have been adopted as major program goals. In order to establish focus of the program, a statement of program expectations is being developed using the program leading to certification for nursery school through grade six (N-6) as an example. This statement of expected outcomes serves as the overall guide for incorporating the program goals into an organized, sequenced series of learning activities. It also serves as a model for all programs in teacher preparation to be offered from the School of Professional Studies.

The statement follows:

> The proposed N-6 Teacher Certification Program is designed to develop teachers who will exemplify and reinforce Potsdam's tradition of excellence in their professional activities. Such teachers are liberally educated in the best sense of the expression with a strong background in the major liberal arts disciplines. They are knowledgeable about the dynamic nature and complexities of contemporary society and recognize that as teachers they must prepare children to adapt and cope with the problems of the modern age. They are sensitive to the diversities and the task of educating all children. They are likewise sensitive to the uniqueness of each child and are knowledgeable about the wide range of abilities and handicapping conditions present in every school population. From these sensitivities springs a strong commitment to the individualization of instruction for every child. The Potsdam teacher is able to translate this commitment into effective functional learning experiences for children. This teacher utilizes the strength of a liberal arts background supplemented by an extensive range of specific professional competencies to insure validity, depth and relevance in those experiences.
>
> Incorporated in the liberal arts program as a foundation for the professional expertise of the teacher are two very significant components. The first leads to a thorough understanding of the history and philosophy of education as they relate to the basic nature, practices and issues present in today's schools. The second provides knowledge about child growth and development coupled with an indepth and extensive mastery of learning theories and their application to the teaching-learning process. Although the range of professional competencies is extensive, the Potsdam teacher is far more than a technician. Because of understandings and insights into basic theories upon which many techniques have been developed, the teacher is able to be flexible, to innovate, to be creative and make learning an exciting and rewarding experience for each and every child.

The unique features of a program based on these expectations are that in addition to developing the usual skills associated with teaching the basic subject areas, teachers will be prepared to deal with all children as individuals and to establish educational goals for each child. In order to individualize instruction to this degree it is necessary to call on many resources both within and outside the classroom which are not traditionally utilized in the educational process. These resources are described in those competency clusters dealing with professional interactions, student-student relationships, conferral and referral and individualized teaching. A teacher prepared through this program should be competent in utilizing peer teaching situations, resource specialists, parents as well as those experts associated with other agencies which deal with the delivery of human services.

It is obvious that the program contains components traditionally associated with teacher preparation, but goes far beyond the tradition in preparing a person who is skilled in establishing human relationships and utilizing those relationships in enhancing the education of children.

Figure No. 1 depicts the general format to be used for all regular teacher education programs at this institution. It will be noted that programs include a common core of courses designed to apply to teaching in general, and specific courses which relate to levels and areas of certification.

In order to successfully implement a program which stresses those skills and attitudes needed to individualize programs for all children, it is recognized that theoretical knowledge must be translated into practice. In many college courses, theory is presented with the expectation that once there is a conceptual grasp of that theory, practice will naturally follow. In order to develop the appropriate skills needed to effect classroom practice, faculty have agreed to utilize the "Components of Training" as identified by Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers in their paper "Training Ourselves to Teach: The Message of Research." Joyce and Showers describe six components of training as follows:

1. Presentation of theory
2. Modeling of demonstration of skills and models
3. Practice in simulated and classroom settings
4. Structured feedback
5. Open-ended feedback
6. Coaching for application

Research in over two hundred studies, indicates that if theory is expected to be translated into practice, all six components must be used in order to meet with success. The presentation of theory alone will result in less than ten percent transfer to practice. Even the addition of modeling or demonstration, practice and feedback will result in achieving less than a twenty percent rate of success. Course descriptions will include plans for utilizing all six components in skill development activities. A very important element of the program is a delivery system based on all six of the components of training. Although some knowledge may be appropriately left at the theoretical level, most must be presented within a context that encourages application of the components of learning as described. The implementation of this teaching strategy will require the involvement of children in an educational setting which can be structured to meet the needs of the teacher preparation program. The setting must be physically accessible and under the control of those whose primary function is the preparation of teachers. It is doubtful that any public school, whose primary mission is the education of children, would permit the type of structuring required in certain elements of the program.

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In order to successfully implement a program which stresses those skills and attitudes needed to individualize programs for all children, it is recognized that theoretical knowledge must be translated into practice. In many college courses, theory is presented with the expectation that once there is a conceptual grasp of that theory, practice will naturally follow. This approach is not appropriate for the type of program being developed. In order to develop the appropriate skills needed to affect classroom practice, courses are to address the "Components of Training" as identified by Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers in their paper "Training Ourselves to Teach: The Message of Research." Joyce and Showers describe six components of training as follows:

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A very important element of the program is the delivery system based on using all six of the components of training. It is recognized that theoretical knowledge of teaching is of little value unless teachers can apply that theory in classroom practice. Although some knowledge may be appropriately left at the theoretical level, most must be presented within a context that encourages application of the components of learning as described. Faculty must plan to integrate all six components into appropriate instructional activities. The implementation of this teaching strategy will require the involvement of children in an educational setting which can be structured to meet the needs of the teacher preparation program. The setting must be physically accessible and under the control of those whose primary function is the preparation of teachers. It is doubtful that any public school, whose primary mission is the education of children, would permit the type of structuring required in certain elements of the program.

TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

PRESERVICE

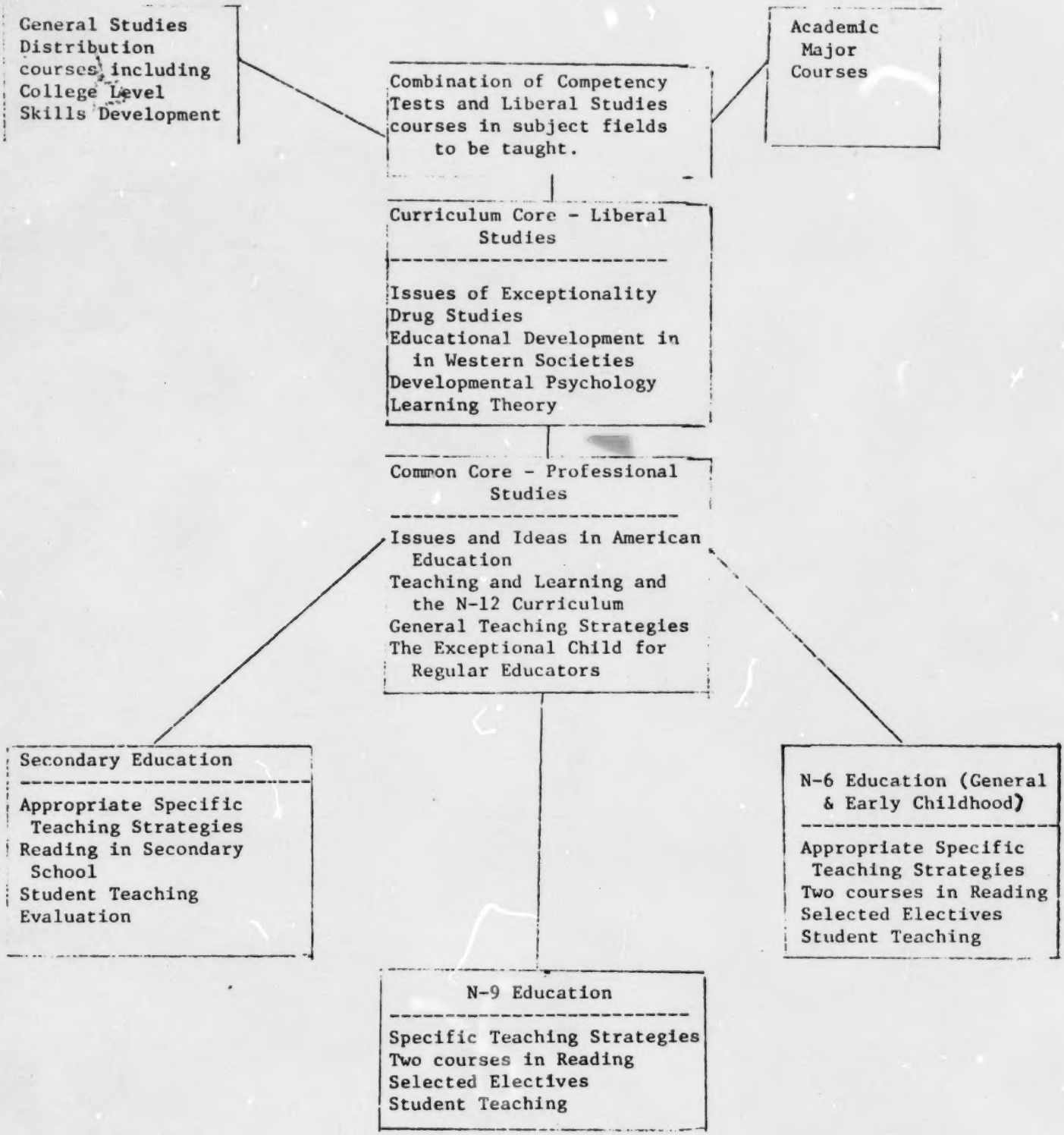

General Studies Distribution courses including College Level Skills Development
Academic Major Courses
Combination of Competency Tests and Liberal Studies courses in subject fields to be taught.
Curriculum Core - Liberal Studies
Issues of Exceptionality
Drug Studies
Educational Development in in Western Societies
Developmental Psychology
Learning Theory
Common Core - Professional Studies
Issues and Ideas in American Education
Teaching and Learning and the N-12 Curriculum
General Teaching Strategies
The Exceptional Child for Regular Educators
Secondary Education
Appropriate Specific Teaching Strategies
Reading in Secondary School
Student Teaching
Evaluation
N-6 Education (General & Early Childhood)
Appropriate Specific Teaching Strategies
Two courses in Reading
Selected Electives
Student Teaching
N-9 Education
Specific Teaching Strategies
Two courses in Reading
Selected Electives
Student Teaching

FIGURE NO. 1

However, in view of the fact that a campus-based educational facilty is limited in scope and size, practical experiences in that setting need to be supplemented by selected activities in public schools. In order to maintain consistency in program goals, selected public schools should be identified and the personnel in those schools trained in the use of components of training and other elements of the program. These activities could constitute a positive role for inservice activities in the schools and could offer the opportunity for productive summer workshops. By focusing inservice activities on clearly stated, mutually agreed on objectives, closer relationships could be fostered between this institution of higher education and public schools.

The Campus Learning Center has been relocated on campus and members of the faculty are currently being trained in appropriate methods for best utilizing this facility. There is a developing relationship among those directly assigned to the Campus Learning Center and those instructing in college classes. This relationship is being fostered through weekly staff development meetings focused on various models for observing, participating in and evaluating a variety of teaching/learning strategies.

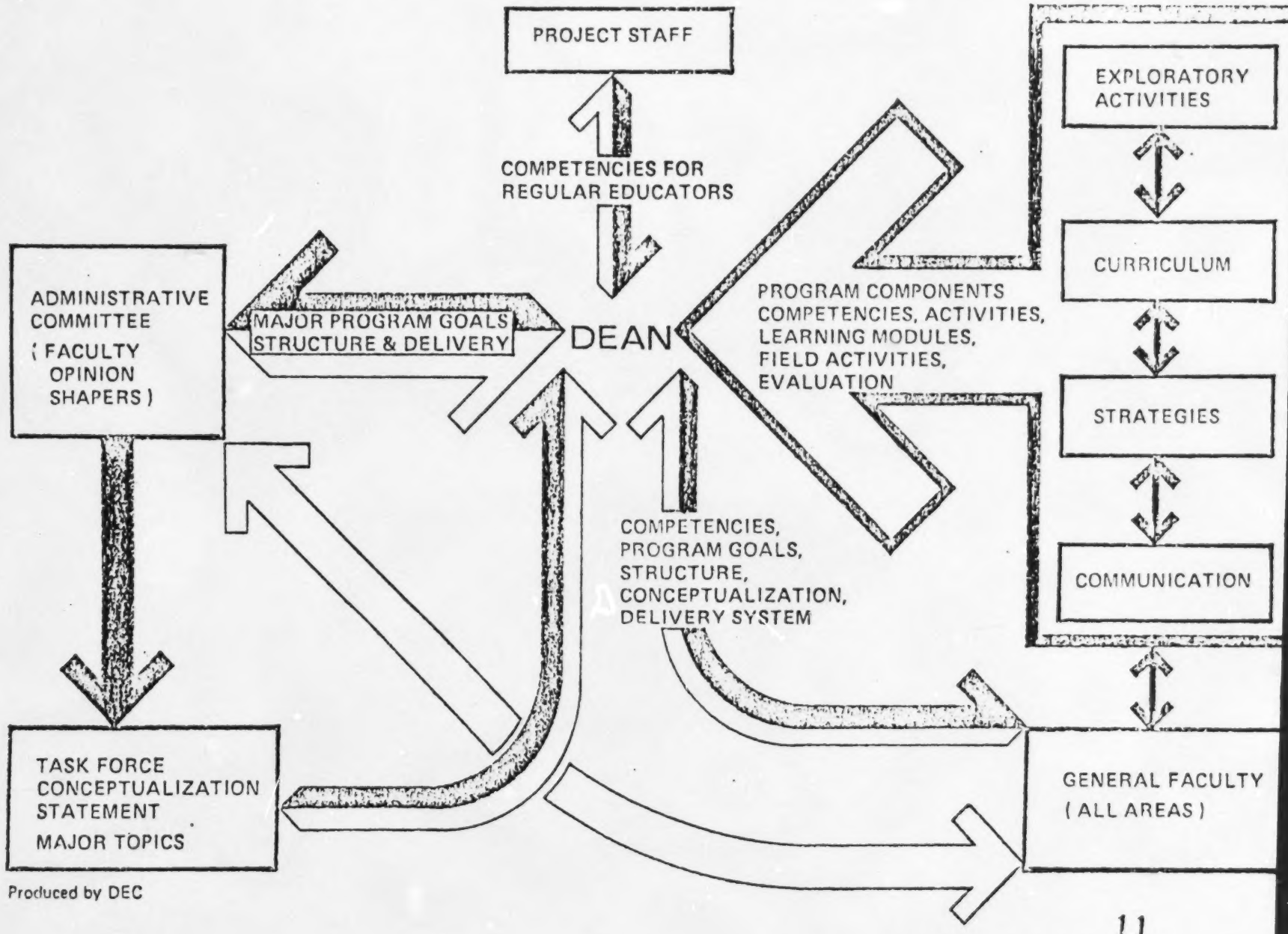
The types and magnitude of program changes described in the preceding section of this paper require a strong and involved leader to act as change agent. In this institution, the Dean of Professional Studies assumed this role. This action was consistent with the goal of Dean's Grants funded through the Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped which were designed to bring about program changes. As indicated in a pamphlet entitled "Deans' Grants Projects: Regular Teacher Preparation and Public Law 94-142" distributed by the National Support Systems Project, the centrality of the dean's position as planner and chief engineer of program changes is vital to the success of projects.

Although there are numerous models for change activities appropriate for use, the model chosen at Potsdam College did thrust the dean into a position of being the architect of new program formats. It was felt by those involved in the preliminary planning that since program goals, format and delivery system were being drawn and assimilated from a variety of sources, that the development of the overall structure and focus of the program could be best accomplished by one person. The dean, therefore, assumed a central role of leadership in program revision activities.

The first task which the dean faced was acquiring the technical knowledge related to the content and interpretation of P.L. 94-142 and developing a more than superficial knowledge of educational practices involving the handicapped. Once this knowledge was acquired, the actual framework of the revised program could be shaped. In the following diagram, labeled figure No. 2, this initial step is indicated by the arrows flowing to and from the project staff which arranged for the training of the dean.

Figure No. 2

A STRATEGY FOR CHANGE


PROJECT STAFF
COMPETENCIES FOR REGULAR EDUCATORS
ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE (FACULTY OPINION SHAPERS)
MAJOR PROGRAM GOALS STRUCTURE & DELIVERY
DEAN
PROGRAM COMPONENTS COMPETENCIES, ACTIVITIES, LEARNING MODULES, FIELD ACTIVITIES, EVALUATION
EXPLORATORY ACTIVITIES
CURRICULUM
STRATEGIES
COMMUNICATION
COMPETENCIES, PROGRAM GOALS, STRUCTURE, CONCEPTUALIZATION, DELIVERY SYSTEM
TASK FORCE CONCEPTUALIZATION STATEMENT MAJOR TOPICS
GENERAL FACULTY (ALL AREAS)

Produced by DEC

The second step involved the selection of a small body of faculty who were regarded as leaders among the faculty. It was recognized that the majority of these people were leaders because they had demonstrated a willingness to become involved in curriculum development, were willing to take risks and were articulate advocates of new ideas. This group, drawn carefully from the faculty and known as "opinion shapers," were invited to a week-end retreat where the dean introduced the overall structure of the program, described the ten clusters of capability as program goals and discussed the delivery system based on the six components of training. These concepts were overwhelmingly embraced by the group and a task force was organized to work throughout the summer to expand on the clusters of capability, identify proposed courses and to prepare a conceptualization statement. This work was reported to the dean who shared it with the initial group of faculty for additional input.

During the fall semester, a retreat for the total faculty was arranged. During this two-day meeting, the dean delivered a program schema together with the work accomplished by the task force. The faculty universally endorsed the program as described at that point. It was felt by several, that this overwhelming endorsement was due in part to the advocacy of the "opinion shapers" who now regarded the program as theirs.

Upon return to campus, a number of committees were formed which involved over ninety percent of the faculty. These committees were charged specifically with development of courses complete with competency statements, sequencing of program elements and the planning for utilization of the Campus Learning Center. When the work of the committees had progressed to the point where it could be shared, the dean chaired a meeting of committee heads to share information and to check the work accomplished against the ten clusters of capability which had been adopted as major program goals.

The following fall, an additional faculty retreat was held to share the committee work with the total faculty and to adopt the initial portions of the program for immediate implementation.

The use of the planning model as described expedited the development of new programs of preparation. Pressure to develop and offer the new programs in a relatively short time was felt by the dean and others due to the fact that handicapped children were being deprived of an appropriate education. It was recognized that this and other institutions cannot, in good conscience, continue to prepare teachers who do not have the skills and knowledge to implement the provisions of Public Law 94-142.